るろうに剣心

けんしん

明治剣客浪漫譚

めいじけんかくうまんだん

和月伸宏

★この作品はフィクションです。実在の人物・団体・事件などには、いっさい関係ありません。著者カラー原画に加え、著者の原画をもとに集英社でデジタル彩色を行った特別編集版です。

るろうに剣心

けんしん

—明治剣客浪漫譚—

めいじけんかくろまんたん

巻之十二 京都大火

かんのきょうとたいか

和月伸宏

わつきのぶひろ

登場人物紹介

神谷薫

緋村剣心（人斬り抜刀斎）

明神弥彦

相楽左之助

比古清十郎

巻町操

斎藤一

志々雄真実

るろうに剣心

11巻までのあらすじ

流浪人・緋村剣心――今でこそ、不殺を誓い、持つ刀は逆刃刀だが、彼こそは新時代・明治を切り拓いた維新志士の中で、最強無比の伝説をもつ「人斬り抜刀斎」、その人であった。

剣心は時の内務卿・大久保利通に、京都で暗躍する「人斬り抜刀斎」の後継者・志々雄真実の暗殺を依頼される。薫達は止めるが、志々雄の配下で「十本刀」の一人・瀬田宗次郎に大久保が暗殺され、剣心は京都に行く決心をする。元新撰組で、今は警視庁・警部補の斎藤一の同行を断り、ひとり京都に発つ剣心の後を薫と弥彦、左之助、そして剣心の命を狙う御庭番衆御頭・蒼紫が追った。蒼紫を慕う少女・操と道連れになった剣心は道中、早くも志々雄と対面。宗次郎と闘い、逆刃刀を折られてしまう。京都に着いた剣心は操の育ての親で、御庭番衆・翁の営む料亭「葵屋」の世話に…。新しい逆刃刀を探す剣心は、今は亡き刀匠・新井赤空の息子一家を守るため、「十本刀」の一人、〝刀狩〟の張と闘い、苦戦の末、張を倒す。赤空の最後の一振り、逆刃刀・真打を託された剣心は、かつての師、現・飛天御剣流継承者「比古清十郎」を訪ねた。奥義伝授を願い出るが、「理を理解せず、権力に与した者に奥義を得る資格なし」と断られる。そこへ操と薫、弥彦が現れた。比古は薫達の話から維新後、剣心が真の理を会得した事を知り、時代の苦難から人々を守る飛天御剣流の剣客として、奥義伝授を決断する。一方、剣心の居場所探しを翁に頼み、断られた蒼紫は情報を得るため、志々雄一派に身を寄せる。そんな蒼紫をとめようと闘いを挑む翁。が、情を捨て、修羅と化した蒼紫に力及ばず、その兇剣に破れるのだった。悲しみの中、操は自ら新しい御頭となり、志々雄一派、そして蒼紫をも倒す事を決意する。その頃、左之助は京都の警察署で斎藤と接触。張の尋問に立ち会い、志々雄が京都大放火を準備していることを知る。

御免
和月

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HIKO SEIJŪRŌ

比古清十郎

るろうに剣心

RUROUNI KENSHIN

Act 94

The Initiation Begins

WH...
WHAT...

...ARE
YOU?!

THERE IS NO POINT IN NAMING MYSELF TO THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE.

GYAAH!

GUHH

HAH...

YOU WERE UNLUCKY, CHILD. THE SHŌGUNATE'S LAWS HAVE BEEN LAX SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF THE BLACK SHIPS TWO YEARS AGO. MORE AND MORE SELF-DECLARED *RŌNIN* PROWL AS BANDITS IN THIS AREA.

SOME FATE BROUGHT ME HERE, AND I HAVE TAKEN REVENGE FOR YOU.

BUT THE DEAD WILL NOT BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE BY MOURNING OR HATRED.

SUCH THINGS HAPPEN EVERYDAY, EVERYWHERE, IN TODAY'S JAPAN.

YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL THAT YOU, AT LEAST, ARE ALIVE.

IF YOU GO TO THE VILLAGE AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN...

...AND TELL THEM YOUR STORY, THEY WILL CARE FOR YOU.

ZAN

...I REMEMBER SOMETHING FROM LONG AGO.
YOU SHOULD BE UP BY NOW.
HEY. HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SLEEP?

...I'LL CONTINUE MY STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE.

...WELL, IF YOU WON'T GET UP...

HH

HH

HH

ガシッ

LET'S SEE, THE LAST TIME YOU WET YOUR BED WAS WHEN YOU WERE 11 YEARS OLD...

ほえ!!

IT'S NOT FAIR.

IT'S TAKEN *YEARS* TO FORGET THOSE THINGS!

...THEN THERE WAS THE TIME YOU ATE "LAUGHING MUSHROOM" AND NEARLY GUFFAWED YOURSELF TO DEATH...

I'M TOO SELFLESS FOR MY OWN GOOD.

NO? AND IT IS FAIR FOR ME TO SPEND A WHOLE WEEK RETRAINING THE IDIOT APPRENTICE WHO RAN OUT ON ME?

MASTER !

...BY LANDING ONE BLOW ON ME.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO EARN YOUR TRAINING...

THE PAST BORES ME, ANYWAY.

HIKO SEIJŪRŌ. 13TH HEIR TO HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

BY NATURE HE IS CRUDE, CRUEL, AND HATEFUL.

PLUS, HE KNOWS THIS ONE'S PAST, MAKING HIM FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN SAITŌ

ボソ ボソ ボソ

DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT... EVEN IF THEY'RE TRUE.

SMALL ATTACKS WON'T WORK. EVERYTHING MUST HINGE ON ONE, FULL-STRENGTH, ALL-OUT STRIKE!

HERE GOES...

HO.

...ARE UN-MATCHED.

HIS SKILLS...

飛天 (ひてん)

HITEN...

御剣流 (みつるぎりゅう)

...MITSURUGI-RYŪ...

龍槌閃!!!

りゅうついせん

RYŪTSUISEN... "DRAGON FLIGHT"!!

...RYŪSHŌSEN: "DRAGON-HAMMER STRIKE"!!

龍翔閃!!!

りゅうしょうせん

YOU SHOULD BE UP BY NOW.

HEY. HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SLEEP?

OWW—

!

.....

...SO YOU FORGOT ABOUT YOUR LANDING, AND WHACKED YOUR HEAD. IDIOT.

YOU FOCUSED ALL YOUR CONCENTRATION ONLY ON YOUR SWING...

I WOULDN'T CALL IT PERFECT ...

...BUT A STRIKE IS A STRIKE.

...YOU COULDN'T HAVE LANDED A BLOW ON ME IN TEN YEARS.

BUT IF YOU *HADN'T* DONE THAT...

I'LL START YOUR INITIATION INTO THE SECRET.

NOW. DON'T MOVE EVEN A HAIR.

IF YOU DO, YOU'LL DIE. SIMPLE AS THAT.

THESE ARE THE SWORD-STRIKES.

LISTEN WELL.

FIRST, KARATAKE (KIRIOROSHI).

KARATAKE
傍 唐

KESAGIRI
袈裟斬り

KESAGIRI AND SAKAGESA.

HIDARI-NAGI
左薙

HIDARI-KIRIAGE
左切上

SAKAGESA
逆袈裟

MIGI-NAGI (DŌ) AND HIDARI-NAGI (GYAKUDŌ).

MIGI-NAGI
右薙

MIGI-KIRIAGE
右切上

MIGI-KIRIAGE AND HIDARI-KIRIAGE.

AND THEN, SAKAKAZE (KIRIAGE).

SAKAKAZE
風 逆

AND FINALLY, TSUKI, WHICH PIERCES AT THE SHORTEST DISTANCE.

TSUKI
刺突

NATURALLY, THE DEFENSIVE FORMS ALSO REVOLVE AROUND THESE NINE.

EVERY STYLE, EVERY MOVE, FALLS INTO ONE OF THESE NINE CATEGORIES.

AND YET...

WHEN THE "GODSPEED" OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ IS USED TO ITS FULLEST, UNLEASHING ALL NINE STRIKES AT ONCE...
...IT CANNOT BE DEFENDED AGAINST.

NOT A FINGER COULD BE MOVED...

THIS IS THE SECRET!

THIS IS THE HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...

...KUZU-RYŪSEN— "NINE-HEADED DRAGON."

AND, AS A CHARGING ATTACK, IT'S ALSO IMPOSSIBLE TO DODGE.

UNLIKE ANOTHER MULTIPLE STRIKE, "DRAGON'S LAIR" RYŪSŌSEN, ALL NINE STRIKES OF KUZU-RYŪSEN CARRY FATAL IMPACT.

OF ALL MY MOVES, IT IS THE GREATEST.

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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第九十五幕「命を捨てても…」

Act 95
Even If It Costs My Life

HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ, "KUZŪ-RYŪSEN."

...THE *SECRET* OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ!

A CHARGE AND NINE STRIKES, IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND OR DODGE...

YOU LEARN BY *OVERREACHING* YOURSELF. BY GETTING YOURSELF *WHACKED.*

YOU DON'T LEARN MOVES STEP BY STEP.

IT'S HOW YOU'VE *ALWAYS* TRAINED.

QUIT BABBLING.

WHAT...?! I-I CAN'T JUST...

STOP GAPING AND DO IT.

IT HELPS THAT I'VE ALWAYS ADJUSTED THE FORCE.

WELL...

RYŪTSUISEN

龍槌閃

RYŪSHŌSEN

龍翔閃

RYŪKANSEN

龍巻閃

HE'S *RIGHT* ...

IT'S A WONDER THEY WEREN'T FATAL...

FULL-
ON.

.....

SO, IF
YOU THINK
YOU'VE
GOT IT,
BRING IT
TO ME.

るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚

...

...BUT NOT BECAUSE THE STRIKES WEREN'T SEEN.

IT'S TRUE DODGING WAS IMPOSSIBLE ...

...WERE CLEARLY VISIBLE.

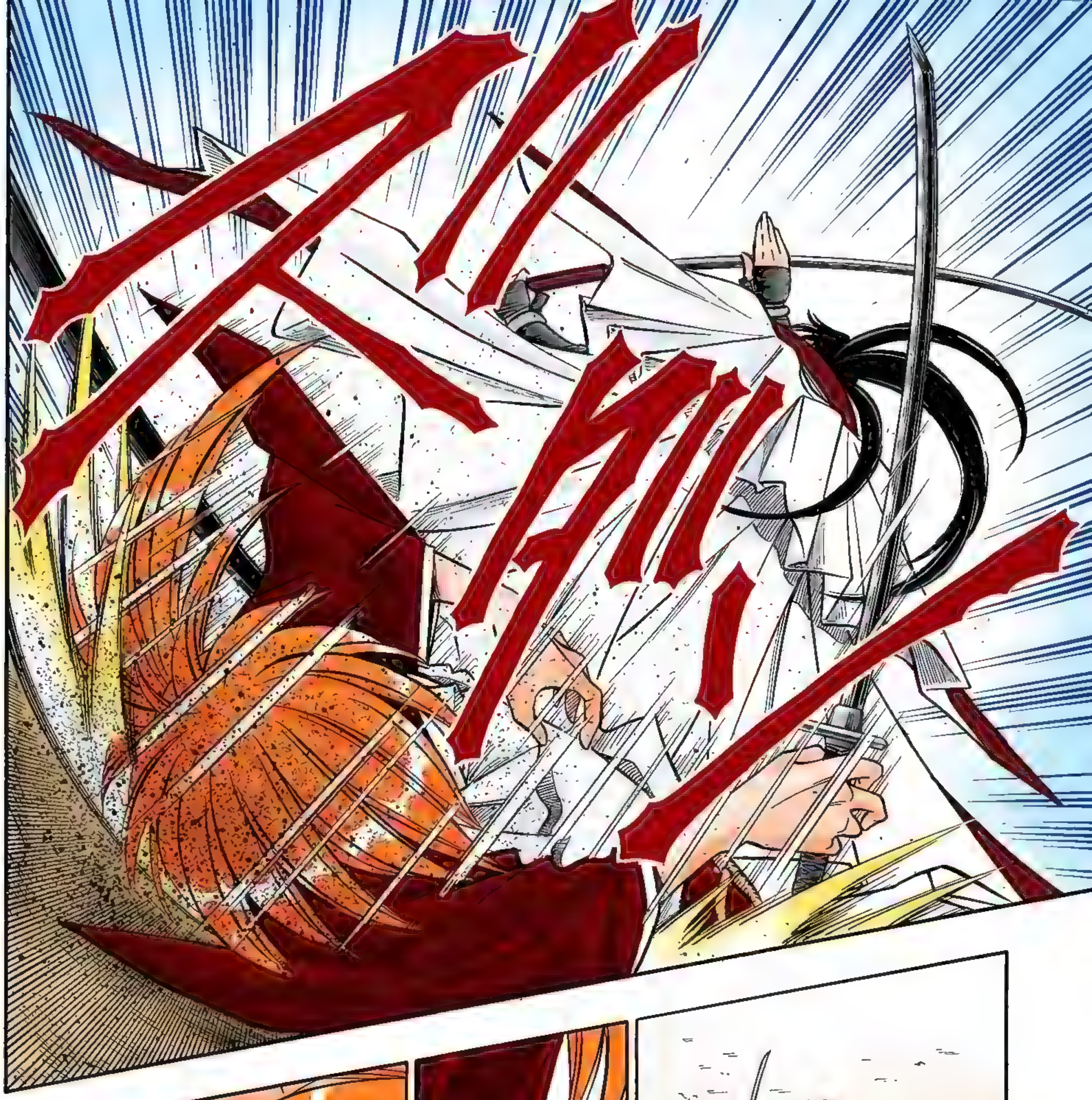
ALL NINE STRIKES ...

...KUZU-RYŪSEN— NINE-HEADED DRAGON!

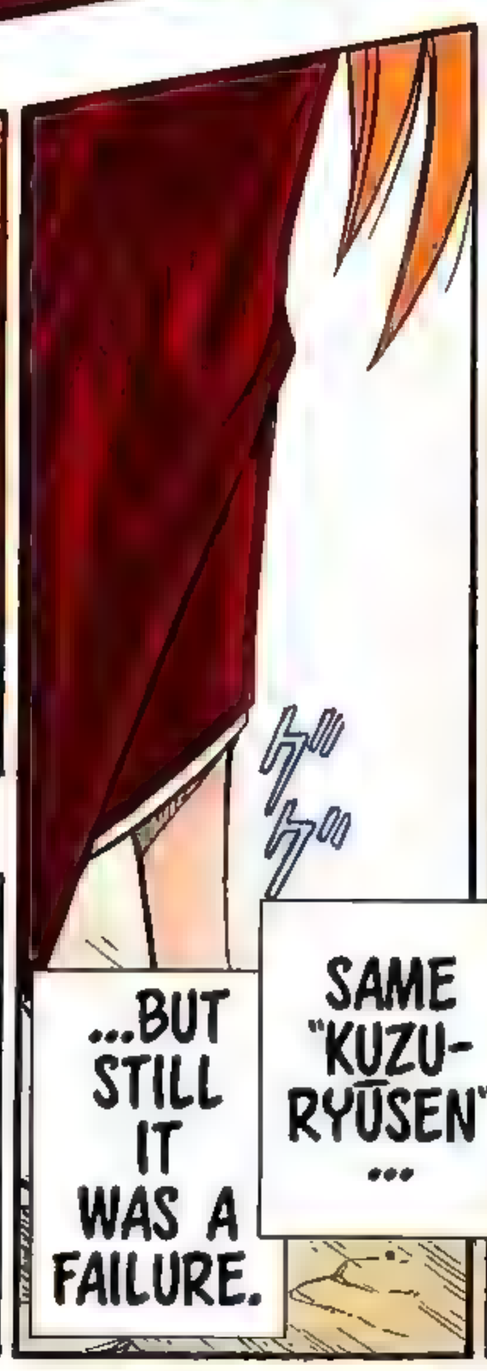
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...

THAT DID IT...!

壱
弐
参
肆
伍
陸
漆
捌
玖
拾


KAZE

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH IT?


...BUT STILL IT WAS A FAILURE.
SAME "KUZU-RYŪSEN" ...

NOTHING. YOURS WAS PERFECT.

MULTIPLE STRIKES DEPEND ON ARM STRENGTH. CHARGES DEPEND ON WEIGHT.

IN BOTH AREAS, YOU'RE INFERIOR.

BUT EVEN WHEN THE MOVE IS *EXACTLY* THE SAME...

...IF THE WIELDER IS DIFFERENT, THE *FORCE* WILL BE DIFFERENT.

...YOUR "NINE HEADS" ARE NOTHING.

SO, WHEN YOU FACE *MY* KUZU-RYŪSEN...

BUT THERE *IS* ONE MOVE THAT CAN DEFEAT MINE...

...AND *ONLY* ONE.

AH.

THEN...

...THE KUZU-RYŪSEN CAN NEVER...!

WHAT ?!

WHY THE SURPRISE ?

DID I EVER SAY THAT KUZU-RYŪSEN WAS THE SECRET?

...TRICKED AGAIN.

HEH

AND IT'S *THAT* WHICH IS THE *TRUE* HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ SECRET—

AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI— DRAGON FLIGHT OF HEAVEN.

KUZU-RYŪSEN WASN'T CREATED FOR BATTLE, BUT AS A *TEST* FOR THE INITIATION INTO THE SECRET.

THE INITIATE TRADITIONALLY FACES IT FIRST...

THE "AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI" WILL APPEAR.

THINK *HARD* ABOUT THE NATURE OF KUZU-RYŪSEN.

BUT...

...HE WILL BE CONSIDERED *READY* FOR THE SECRET.

...AND, IF HE CAN OVERCOME HIS *MASTER'S* NINE DRAGONS ...

THE *NATURE* OF KUZU-RYŪSEN ...

TO DEFEAT IT...IT MUST BE COUNTERED WITH BATTŌJUTSU, *BEFORE* IT'S DELIVERED.

...IS THAT OF A MOVE THAT CAN'T BE BLOCKED OR DODGED.

THAT IS THE TRUE SECRET OF THE DRAGON FLIGHT OF HEAVEN.

AS FAST AS IT IS, YOUR BATTŌJUTSU MUST BE FASTER STILL.

EXACTLY RIGHT.

...VERY GOOD.

HOW FAST CAN YOU POSSIBLY STRIKE?

...THAT SAKABATŌ WASN'T MADE FOR BATTŌJUTSU.

STILL...

...A SHEATHED SWORD... NULL FORM...

MAYBE SO.

RECKLESS.

"BACK TO THE RIVER," IS IT THEN?*

*TO GIVE EVERYTHING YOU HAVE, AWARE THERE'S NO CHANCE OF RECOVERY IF YOU FAIL.

I MUST TRY FOR THE SECRET... EVEN IF IT COSTS MY LIFE.

BUT THERE'S NO CHOICE.

.....

WHAT ?

YOU ARE MY IDIOT PUPIL.

MASTER ...

WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND A THING.

I GIVE YOU ONE NIGHT.

SEARCH YOUR SOUL AND FIND WHAT'S LACKING IN YOU BEFORE SUNRISE.

IF YOU CANNOT DO THAT, YOU WILL NOT ONLY FAIL TO OBTAIN THE SECRET...

...BUT HERE WILL ALSO BE WHERE YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE.

WHAT ...

...AM I LACKING ?

I'M A KILLER WHO HIDES HIS HITOKIRI NATURE DEEP WITHIN HIS SOUL.

...I'VE NEVER THOUGHT I WAS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE.

ゴトッ

...

NO KID. NO STRAY CAT. NOBODY'S COME THIS WAY FOR A WEEK.

NOPE.

HERE.

...HE'S NOT HERE?

.....

SUICIDE IN DESPAIR ...?

...COMMON ENOUGH. THESE DAYS.

朝日山 万寿

IT CERTAINLY IS...

I KILL AND KILL, AND STILL THE VILLAINS, LIKE MAGGOTS...

...SPRING FROM THE CORPSE OF A JAPAN DECOM-POSING.

...TOO MANY TIMES, I CANNOT SAVE A SOUL.

EVEN WHEN I WIELD MY SWORD ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...

AND ALL I CAN DO IS BURY THE VICTIMS.

THERE WILL BE MORE AND MORE ACTS LIKE THIS.

THEY WERE SLAVERS, NOT PARENTS.

NOT ONLY YOUR PARENTS ...

...BUT FOR THE BANDITS, TOO.

...DIED OF CHOLERA LAST YEAR.

THE PARENTS ...

※コレラ

BANDITS OR SLAVERS, ONCE THEY'RE DEAD, THEY'RE JUST BODIES.

STILL, YOU MADE GRAVES FOR THEM.

WHAT ARE THOSE THREE STONE GRAVES?

ALL THREE FORCIBLY TAKEN FROM THEIR PARENTS AS PAYMENT FOR DEBTS.

KASUMI-SAN, AKANE-SAN, SAKURA-SAN.

SO I THOUGHT, EVEN IF IT COSTS MY LIFE...

...I'LL HAVE TO PROTECT THEM.

I ONLY KNEW THEM FOR A DAY, BUT I WAS THE ONLY ONE HERE. AND I HAVE NO PARENTS.

I LOOKED FOR FLOWERS TO OFFER, BUT I COULDN'T FIND EVEN ONE.

...I COULDN'T FIND THE RIGHT STONES TO MAKE A NICE GRAVE FOR THEM, LIKE I WANTED.

BUT...

A GOOD SAKE IS THE LEAST I CAN DO.

KPOK

MAN OR WOMAN, TO ATTAIN BUDDHAHOOD WITHOUT KNOWING THE TASTE OF GOOD SAKE IS A CRIME.

FROM NOW ON, YOUR NAME IS TO BE "KENSHIN."

!

FOR KENKAKU OR "SWORD-ARTS," THAT'S FAR TOO GENTLE.

SHINTA.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME, BOY?

...MY *MOST PRECIOUS KNOWLEDGE.*

I SHALL ALSO GIVE YOU...

"EVEN SO..."

"NINETEEN YEARS AGO."

...TOMORROW WILL SEE THE *END* OF THAT LIFE.

...WHETHER THE INITIATION IS SUCCESSFUL OR NOT...

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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.....

Act 96
Between Life and Death

THAT'S DANGEROUS, DAYDREAMING BY THE WINDOW.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN THE ENEMY WILL TARGET YOU.

MISAO-CHAN...

NO, NO!

NOT MISAO... OKASHIRA!

.....

ちっちっち

I HOPE ...

...HIMURA COMES BACK SOON WITH THIS "SECRET."

...EVEN IF HE DOES GET STRONGER.

...EVEN IF HE DOES BECOME A BETTER SWORDSMAN ...

YES... BUT...

OH, NO. NO, NO.

I'M SORRY. YOU'VE YOUR OWN WORRIES.

WHEN I THINK OF...

ME, AT LEAST, YOU *DON'T*...

...HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT.

...THAT ...

...AND EVEN IF THE FIGHT AGAINST SHISHIO IS EASIER WITH THIS POWERFUL SECRET...

...THE REAL BATTLE WILL BE INSIDE *HIM*, BETWEEN THE SOUL OF A HITOKIRI AND HIS VOW NOT TO KILL.

Act 96

Between Life and Death

...YOU EITHER.
YOU DIDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT.

ミシャッ

ミシャッ

ミシャッ

ミシャッ

……

THAT SO.

...ARE A MAN WHO'S HIT HIS LIMIT.

IN THAT CASE, YOU...

...

...NO.

SO...

...DID YOU DISCOVER WHAT YOU WERE LACKING?

...YOU'LL STILL NEVER DEFEAT THE HITOKIRI IN YOUR SOUL.

AND EVEN IF YOU SOMEHOW *DO* DEFEAT HIM...

...BUT YOU'LL NEVER DEFEAT SHISHIO.

IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE LACKING, YOU'LL NOT ONLY FAIL TO LEARN THE SECRET...

...AND IN BLOOD.

INSTEAD, YOU'LL PLUNGE INTO CONFUSION, ENGULFED IN SOLITUDE...

I FEAR IT IS MY DUTY AS YOUR MASTER...

...TO SPARE YOU THAT.

!!

ALONG WITH THE NAME "HIKO SEIJŪRŌ," THIS WHITE CLOAK, TOO, IS PASSED DOWN.

...ITS SHOULDERS ARE RIGGED WITH SPRINGS WHICH APPLY COUNTER-PRESSURE IN THE AMOUNT OF TEN *KAN**.

TO RESTRAIN IN TIMES OF PEACE THE POWER OF THE HITEN MITSURUGI INHERITOR...

*TEN KAN=37.5 KG.

FINALLY...

...HE'S HERE.

ARE YOU READY ...

...KENSHIN?

...HIKO SEIJŪRŌ.

THE TRUE ...

IS IT HIKO SEIJŪRŌ ...

...WHO SCARES YOU SO?

MY LEFT HAND ...

...IT'S TREMBLING ...

!

NO FEAR.

SINCE LIVING THROUGH THE CHAOS OF THE BAKUMATSU, I'VE BEEN PREPARED FOR IT.

...MY LIFE.

I *MUST* HAVE THE SECRET, EVEN IF IT COSTS...

...FOR THE COMING OF THE NINE-HEADED DRAGON.

PREPARE YOURSELF ...

!

FOR BEHIND HIM, TRULY, IS

DEATH.

死神狩猎

DEATH

KENSHIN!!
...ALL BECAUSE YOU WON'T ASK FOR HELP!
I WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY WITH BEING MISERABLE ...
I'LL BE WATCHING... FROM HELL!
HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP UP THIS RUROUNI ACT?
IT'S THE RUROUNI I WANT TO STAY...
DAMMIT... I WANT TO BE STRONGER ...!
THE REST, HIMURA BATTOSAI, I LEAVE TO YOU.
UNTIL I MYSELF KILL YOU...
ALL YOUR FRIENDS ARE HOPING FOR YOUR SAFETY.
PLEASE DON'T FORGET THAT.
DON'T YOU GO WANDERING OFF WITHOUT MY SAY-SO, GOT THAT?
EH, KENSHIN?
...DON'T LET ANYONE BEAT ME TO IT.
FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY, HIMURA...GO TO KYOTO ONCE MORE.
FROM HERE ON, CHAOS WILL DESCEND ON JAPAN.
...I GLADLY CHOOSE THE GALLOWS INSTEAD, THANK YOU!
IF I'M TO BE USED AS A BARGAINING CHIP AGAINST KEN-SAN...

I CAN'T ...

I CAN'T ...

...DIE.

...EVEN *THINK* TO DIE YET!

YES... THAT'S IT.

YOU BLIND YOURSELF TO THE FACT THAT YOUR OWN LIFE IS ALSO A HUMAN LIFE.

YOU'VE KILLED MANY MEN. YOU CARRY MUCH GUILT.

SO YOU TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE LIGHTLY.

...AND SOMETIMES ALLOWS THE HITOKIRI WITHIN YOU TO REGAIN CONTROL.

THAT STOPS YOU FROM EXERTING YOUR TRUE STRENGTH...

IF YOU'RE TO OVERCOME THIS, YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU JUST SAW.

YOU NEED THE WILL TO *LIVE.*

...EVEN IF YOU QUELL DANGER WITH YOUR FIERCE ANGER, SACRIFICING YOUR LIFE...

...IT IS ONLY FOR ONE SHORT MOMENT IN TIME. AND TIME GOES ON.

EVEN IF YOU PROTECT THE WEAK AND THE ONES YOU LOVE BY SACRIFICING YOURSELF WITH THE COMPASSION OF THE BUDDHA HIMSELF...

...SORROW WILL *REMAIN* IN THOSE PEOPLE. THEY WILL NEVER BE *TRULY* HAPPY.

WITH IT, YOU WILL DEFEAT NOT ONLY SHISHIO, BUT THE HITOKIRI WITHIN YOU.

REMEMBER IT, AND THE AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI IS YOURS.

MASTER...

THE WILL TO LIVE IS THE HEART OF EXISTENCE.

DO NOT FORGET THAT.

PAY IT NO MIND.

...MASTER ?

THIS IS BEYOND YOUR VOW NOT TO KILL.

THIS IS THE FATE OF MASTER AND APPRENTICE WHEN THE SECRET IS PASSED ON.

MASTER !

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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MASTER !!

I, TOO, LEARNED THAT FACT AT THE EXPENSE OF MY MASTER'S LIFE.

AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI IS THE STRONGEST MOVE OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

THE REST IS UP TO YOU, AS... RUROUNI.

THIS IS ALL I CAN TEACH...AS THE MASTER OF MITSURUGI.

Act 97
The Ten Swords Summoned

MASTER
...

IT WAS ONLY SAKABATŌ... AND YOU'RE SO STRONG...

MASTER, DON'T JOKE...

YOU CAN'T DIE!

ZEN!

IT ISN'T *ALLOWED* FOR YOU TO DIE!!

Act 97
The Ten Swords Summoned

...THE *HEART MEDICATION* MASTER MADE, BACK DURING THE TIME OF THE POISON MUSHROOMS!

IT'S HERE...

MASTER!!

IT'S TOO LATE TO GO DOWN THE MOUNTAIN AND FIND A DOCTOR.

...AND WITH HIS TOUGH-NESS... MAYBE...

IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT WITH THIS MEDICINE ...

I'M HOME...

...THERE YOU ARE!

"WHERE"?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!

WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU LOOK MAD.

SO I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT SOME LOCAL TREATS FOR US TO SHARE.

STAYING IN THIS *HOLE* WOULD DRIVE *ANYONE* CRAZY.

LISTEN, YOU!

WHILE YOU WERE GONE, THAT *USUI* CAME... AND IT WAS A *DISASTER*!

WELL, I COULDN'T DECIDE WHICH ONES WERE GOOD.

YOU WERE GONE THREE DAYS FOR *THAT*?!

.....

WHAT? WHAT IS IT??

USUI-SAN. LONG TIME NO SEE.

WANT ONE?

YATSU-HASHI, EH...?

FOR YOU TO LEAVE SHISHIO'S SIDE, IT CAN ONLY BE UNDER ORDERS.

STILL... LOCAL DELICACIES ONLY?

WHAT *ABOUT* "THAT USUI" ...?

眼心

EVEN WITH YOUR TWISTED EMOTIONS, I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

MY SOUL'S EYE "SHINGAN" CAN SEE THROUGH THE SOUL, WHERE THE NAKED EYES CANNOT SEE.

HEH...

HUH?

THE LAST THREE HAVE JUST ARRIVED.

OH, YES, I FORGOT. THE *TEN SWORDS* ARE TO GATHER IN THE GREAT HALL IMMEDIATELY.

?

WELL, WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE BOTH HIDING, IT'S OF NO CONCERN.

GEH.

HEY. KAMATARI-SAN.

!

SŌ-CHAN! HEY! LONG TIME NO SEE!

UH-HUH...

AND YUMI-SAN. SAME TO YOU.

ABSOLUTELY! I'M *FOR SURE* NOT LOSING TO A *MAN*.

IF YOU *ARE* A MAN.

HEH HEH

THIS TIME, WE'LL SETTLE WHO WINS SHISHIO-SAMA'S HEART FOR SURE.

ELDER SAIZUCHI.

ZUZUZU

NYEH-HEH-HEH-HEH. YOUTH IS SUCH A *LIVELY* TIME.

YOUTHS THESE DAYS, EH?

NOT ONLY WILL *THEY* NOT TALK TO ME, THEY WON'T EVEN *LOOK* AT ME.

GLAD TO SEE YOU ARE DOING WELL.

OH YEAH? AND WHERE *IS* YOUR PARTNER?

WHO, FUJI? HE'S OUTSIDE...

THEY'RE ALL JUST *JEALOUS* OF MY POWERS.

HEH. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO SAYS SO.

...AS HE CAN'T EVEN *FIT* INTO THIS LAIR.

THAT'S ALL OF US.

ALL RIGHT.

SŌJIRŌ, WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING. LATER?

THIS IS A SOUVENIR.

IT'S GO-O-OD...

THE PREPARATION OF THE SHIP IS COMPLETE. WE CAN SAIL ANYTIME. USUI-SAN MAY HAVE SENSED SOMETHING, BUT I WOULDN'T WORRY.

船の準備
完了しました
いつでも
出航可能です
※宇水さんが少し
勘付いたようですが
多分大丈夫でしょう

FORGIVE ME, SHISHIO-SAN, FOR DISAPPEARING THESE PAST THREE DAYS.

MM.

HEH.

I'LL HAVE SOME LATER.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TROUBLE.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING SO FAR.

I KNOW ...

...THAT I'VE MADE YOU ALL WAIT QUITE LONG.

...BUT THE REST OF US *ARE* HERE.

張（ちょう）"刀狩（かたながり）"の

WE STILL ARE MISSING CHŌ, DUE TO AN UNEXPECTED INCIDENT...

"SWORD HUNTER CHO"

"BLIND SWORD" USUI

THOSE WHO WANT TO KILL ME.

"GREAT SCYTHE" KAMATARI

THOSE WHO ADMIRE ME.

"HEAVEN'S SWORD" SŌJIRŌ

"CARE-TAKER" YUMI

"OGRE" IWANBŌ

THOSE WHO DESPAIR OF THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT.

"ALL-KNOWING" HŌJI

THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR STRENGTH.

"ANGRY GOD" ANJI

"DESTROYING YAN" FUJI

"DESTROYING YIN" SAIZUCHI

...THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME TO STAND UP TOGETHER.

THOUGH OUR REASONS VARY...

"FREE FLIGHT" HENYA

...WE WILL MAKE THE GREAT KYOTO FIRE A REALITY.

TOMORROW, JUST BEFORE MID-NIGHT...

...THE SUN ROSE ON THE DAY OF DESTINY.

AND SO...

チチチ…

WHAT ARE YOU LYING AROUND *SNOOZING* FOR?!

ドカ!!

DON'T YOU HAVE PEOPLE *WAITING* FOR YOUR RETURN?!

QUIT WASTING TIME AND *GET OFF THE MOUNTAIN!*

ガシャン

M...

MASTER !

DON'T JUMP ME LIKE THAT AGAIN.

.....

NOT INTO HUGGING MEN, SORRY.

ガバッ

WHAT ?

WHY WOULD *THIS* WORK? IT'S JUST A *PLACEBO* I COBBLED TOGETHER!

BUT... IT WORKED ... THE MEDICINE *WORKED!*

HUH?

SO THEN...

...HOW...?

LOOK HERE. THE STAY PIN HAS COME OUT TO THE POINT WHERE THE BLADE'S ALMOST LOOSE ENOUGH TO COME OUT.

SAKABATŌ SHINUCHI!

THE POWER OF AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI WAS ABSORBED BY THE BLADE *JUST ENOUGH* TO WEAKEN IT.

IF I HAD TO GUESS ...

...IT'D BE THIS SWORD.

...THAT CONSIDERS ITS WIELDER'S FEELINGS.

IT IS A GREAT SWORD INDEED...

SHAKKŪ-DONO...

.....

OF COURSE, IT WAS MY *PERFECT TRAINING* THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO STRIKE YOUR SWORD AT THAT EXACT POINT.

FROM HERE ON, AS RUROUNI...

...TRAIN TO ADJUST YOUR STRENGTH TO A MORE PRECISE LEVEL WITH YOUR WILL.

AS YOU CAN SEE, IT GIVES EVEN A SAKABATŌ ENOUGH POWER TO KILL.

IN ANY CASE, YOUR INITIATION INTO THE SECRET IS NOW COMPLETE.

...

YES.

...

GOOD.

...AND *GET BACK* TO THE PEOPLE WAITING FOR YOU.

NOW, QUIT WASTING TIME, *LEAVE* THE MOUNTAIN...

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

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THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

WELL, MASTER...

HOLD ON.

YOU'VE EARNED IT.

TAKE IT.

THE WHITE CLOAK PASSED DOWN TO EACH NEW GENERATION...

...IS LIKE A SYMBOL FOR THE INHERITOR OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

Act 98—The Other Objective

I MUST DECLINE.

EX-CUSE ME!!

LOOKS AWFUL ON ME ANYWAY.

IMAGINED...

予想図

完成

...RESULT

……

……

ドーン

...ARE HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ TEACHINGS.

ALL I INTEND TO KEEP...

...OR OF CARRYING ON HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

I'M SORRY. MASTER, BUT I'VE NO INTENTION OF BECOMING THE 14TH "HIKO SEIJŪRŌ"...

SELFISH AS EVER, I SEE.

WHILE I FIGHT AGAINST SHISHIO'S MEN, WILL YOU PROTECT...

...MY FRIENDS AT AOI-YA?

SELFISH OR NOT...

...I'VE ONE MORE REQUEST.

WELL...

...I DON'T SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE SURPRISED.

.....

MASTER ?

HUH.

ぐりん

TIME FOR YOU TO GROW UP, DAMMIT!

...YOU AND I *CEASED* TO BE MASTER AND APPRENTICE.

FROM THE MOMENT YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T CARRY ON HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...

STILL... I DID NOT TEACH YOU THE SECRET TO MAKE YOU *SUFFER*.

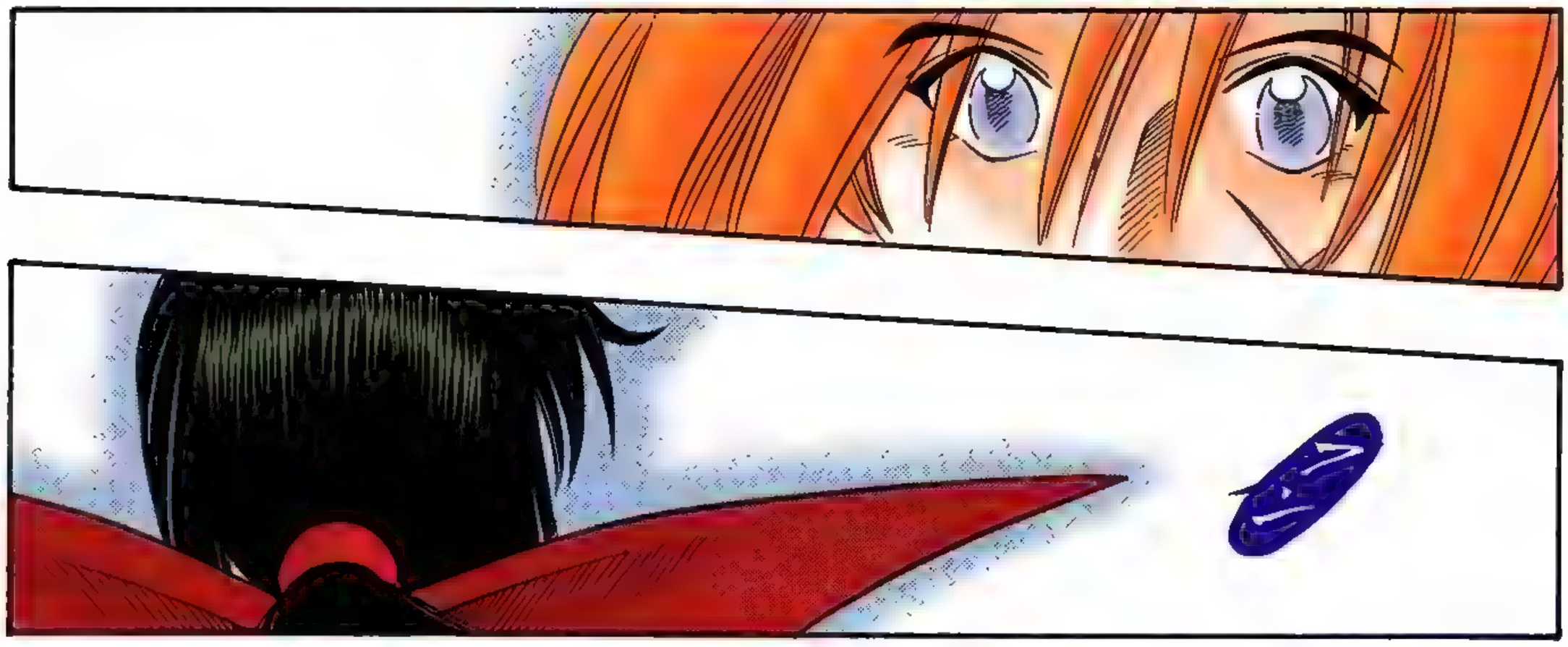
REMEMBER THAT.

MASTER !

FORGET THAT I WAS EVER YOUR MASTER.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS.

JUST GO SETTLE WITH SHISHIO.



Act 98
The Other Objective

ザッ ザッ ザッ ザッ ザッ ザッ

A LOT OF *POLICE* OUT TODAY, TOO...

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

EVERY-BODY'S SO WORKED UP.

ガヤ ガヤ ガヤ

.....

...BE SO SURE.

I WOULDN'T ...

DON'T WORRY. IT'LL BE FINE.

HEAVEN'S ON OUR SIDE, IT SEEMS.

HUH ?

EVEN *SHISHIO* WON'T BE ABLE TO RUN WILD *THEN*.

WITH REINFORCEMENTS FROM OTHER PREFECTURES, WE'LL HAVE NEARLY 5,000 MEN BY EVENING.

I'VE REASSIGNED AS MANY MEN AS I CAN TO KYOTO PATROL... PER YOUR REQUEST, FUJITA-KUN.

THANKS.

I TOLD HIM TO COME BY CARRIAGE, RIGHT AWAY.

HE SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE.

THAT... LEGENDARY MAN WE WERE SEARCHING FOR...APPEARED AT AMAGATAKE STATION THIS MORNING.

...SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

WELL.

PLAYING "RICH MAN," ARE YOU?

RIDING UP IN A CARRIAGE ON A WEEKDAY AFTER-NOON.

ゴゥ

THAT... IS THE HITOKIRI...

...HIMURA BATTŌSAI.

GOING BACK TO BEING HITOKIRI, THEN?

FUJITA-KUN...?

WHAT'S THE STORY?

HMM.

WE'LL SEE...

WHATEVER. I'VE URGENT BUSINESS. COME UP.

GOOD TIMING, TOO. THE LOUDMOUTH'S OUT TO LUNCH.

...SET FIRE TO KYOTO?!

SO SAYS YOUR CAPTIVE, CHŌ OF THE TEN SWORDS.

MM.

THE "GREAT KYOTO FIRE" IS TO BE SPARKED TONIGHT AT 11:59.

THAT SEEMS CERTAIN.

THEN, THIS MORNING, WE PICKED UP A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER FOR INTER-ROGATION.

HE CONFESSED TO BEING ONE OF SHISHIO'S MEN, GETTING READY FOR TONIGHT'S FIRE.

YOU THINK SO, TOO?

...SOMETHING'S ODD.

ARSON FITS THAT STRATEGY PERFECTLY.

WE OUTNUMBER SHISHIO'S FORCES OVERWHELMINGLY. SO HIS STRATEGY HAS TO BE SURPRISE ATTACKS AND ASSASSINATIONS.

NO LONGER WILL WE HIDE IN THIS CAVE!

MEN! THE TIME HAS COME!

NOW WE UNVEIL OUR POWERS TO THE DECADENT AGE!

BUT IF THEIR INFORMATION IS LEAKED THIS EASILY, THEY'D HAVE NO CHANCE AT A SURPRISE.

SO I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR ONE OF THE JUPPONGATANA TO COME HERE AND ASSASSINATE THEIR COMRADE, CHŌ.

SECRECY IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH TO THEM.

IT'S AS IF THEY *WANTED* US TO GET THAT INFORMATION.

...WE STRIKE!

NOW ...

BUT IT HASN'T HAPPENED.

...THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND THE KYOTO FIRE THAT EVEN THE *TEN SWORDS* HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD.

PER-HAPS...

...SOME-THING IS OFF.

IN ANY CASE...

...OTHER OBJECTIVE.

PERHAPS SOME...

SHISHIO HAS A DRAMATIC STREAK. THE "OTHER OBJECTIVE" *MUST* HAVE A SIMILAR QUALITY OF "PLAY" TO IT.

THEY'RE MODELING THEIR FIRE AFTER THE IKEDA-YA INCIDENT.

...WAIT.

WHAT IS THEIR...?

BUT WHAT ?

IF SHISHIO IS TRYING TO MAKE SOME IRONIC *COMMENTARY*, THEN THE *REAL* TARGET OF HIS ATTACK...

...SHŌGUN TOKUGAWA YOSHINOBU DECEIVED HIS OWN MEN, AND SAILED FOR EDO FROM OSAKA BAY. *THAT* WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR THE IMPERIAL ARMY'S VICTORY.

SAITŌ...AT THE TURNING POINT OF THE BAKUMATSU, DURING THE BOSHIN WAR AND THE BATTLE OF TOBA-FUSHIMI...

!

THE KYOTO FIRE IS ONLY A *DIVERSION!* HIS *TRUE* OBJECTIVE IS TO FIRE AT TOKYO FROM THE SEA!

TOKYO (EDO)

...IS HERE!

THAT'S WHY HE LEAKED INFORMATION TO US!

YES...IF HE CAN LURE ENOUGH MANPOWER HERE...

...DRAW EVERYONE'S ATTENTION WITH A BATTLE BETWEEN HIS MEN AND THE POLICE...

THEY'VE *GOT* TO BE STOPPED!

IF THEY SET SAIL, IT WON'T MATTER!

HIS TARGET IS *TOKYO*, THE HEART OF THE GOVERNMENT.

AND I FELL FOR IT.

WE MUST HURRY!

THERE'S NO TIME!

PLANNING ON *DITCHING* ME AGAIN?

...WHY ARE YOU HERE?!

S... SANO ...

UH-UH. NOT THIS TIME.

HEY!!

OR HIS *TWO LEFT FEET*, MORE LIKE.

AW, WE'VE GOT NO *TIME* TO FIGHT! TALK WHILE WE RUN!

WE CAN'T RUN TO OSAKA, FOOL. WE'RE **TAKING** THE CARRIAGE!

LOOK, **FEWER** CHEAP SHOTS, MORE **RUNNING**, OKAY?!

.....

!

WHY AM I HERE?!

TO BE YOUR *STRONG RIGHT ARM*, OF COURSE!

UH-HUH...

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Act 99
As If in Flight

WE GOTTA GO THAT FAST!!

AS IF IN FLIGHT— AS IF IN FLIGHT—

WE GOTTA FLY!!

ALL THE WAY TO OSAKA...

.....

FEH. MISSED.

WHOA!

WITH YOU YELLING, WE CAN'T TALK.

SHUT IT AWHILE, *HUH?*

SAITŌ, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!*

WE OUTNUMBER SHISHIO TEN TIMES.

WITH THAT FORCE, WE SHOULD AT LEAST BE ABLE TO STOP THE FIRE.

5,000 POLICEMEN HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO KYOTO.

TCH

TO CONTINUE...

THE POLICE CAN STOP 500 SOLDIERS, BUT NOT 500 *SPARKS.*

BUT WHAT WAS IT?

DON'T WORRY. I'M HAVING IT DELIVERED.

THAT LETTER BEFORE WE LEFT...

HEY. OMASU-SAN.

...WE'LL NEED THE AID OF THOSE WHO'VE PROTECTED THE CITY SINCE *LONG* BEFORE THE BAKUMATSU.

TO KEEP FIRE FROM ENGULFING KYOTO...

屋 葵 料亭

WHAT IS IT, MISA—

—"OKA-SHIRA." I MEAN.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?!

HOW WOULD I KNOW?!

WELL... UMM...

ぶぉ ぶぉ

HOW MUCH IS A BLACK-MARKET GATLING GUN THESE DAYS ANYWAY?

BUT...

HEY. MISAO-CHAN?

...IF WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT SHISHIO'S MEN, I THOUGHT MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE SOME EXTRA POWER.

I'D RATHER NOT HAVE TO DEPEND ON FIREARMS, BUT...

IT STILL ONLY TOOK FOUR ONIWABANSHŪ TO *DEFEAT* IT.

GATLING GUNS ARE INCREDIBLY POWERFUL. PROBABLY THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS YOU CAN *USE* AGAINST PEOPLE.

OH, THERE THEY ARE.

I THINK THAT'S WHY KENSHIN RESPECTS YOU SO MUCH.

THE TRUE STRENGTH OF THE ONIWABANSHŪ ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN *BUY*, IS IT?

!

LOOK! A LETTER, A LETTER !!

NO IDEA... BUT THIS SCRAGGLY WRITING IS *DEFINITELY* KENSHIN!

A POLICE-MAN? WHY?

A *POLICE-MAN* DELIVERED IT!

HURRY UP AND OPEN IT!

A LETTER FROM *KENSHIN!!*

.....

!

SETTING FIRE TO KYOTO...

...IT'S... MAD...

I WONDERED WHY SO MANY POLICE...

...IT CAN'T BE...

WHAT DO WE DO... MISAO-CHAN?

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW WITH THEM ?!

STOP IT AT ALL COSTS !!

WHAT ELSE ?!

CONTACT EVERYONE IN KYOTO!

RELEASE THE CARRIER PIGEONS!

KUROJŌ, SHIROJŌ, MASU-KAMI, ŌMIME!

EVERYONE, INTO YOUR SHINOBI ROBES!

STILL... FIGHTING ALONGSIDE ONIWABANSHŪ ... IT'S THE *LAST* THING I WOULD'VE THOUGHT, WHEN WE FOUGHT 'EM IN TOKYO...!

YOU KNOW IT!

IT'S TIME FOR THE KYOTO ONIWABANSHŪ TO *ACT!*

I'VE SENT A TELEGRAM TO OSAKA...

BUT MOST OF THEIR MEN ARE IN KYOTO, SO A SIEGE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

AND THIS CARNAGE WON'T GET THERE UNTIL MIDNIGHT.

THERE'LL BE NO TIME FOR A THOROUGH SEARCH...

EVEN IF WE SCREW UP, TOKYO WON'T GO DOWN IN ONE OR TWO CANNON BLASTS.

ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS HIT THEM WITH ALL WE'VE GOT!

ALL WE CAN DO IS DO WHAT WE CAN!

!

WE HAVE NO TIME!

BE SWIFT IN YOUR ACTIONS ...

...AS IF IN FLIGHT !!!

WE'RE TALKING, HERE.

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO *SHUT IT*, BLOCK-HEAD?

ONCE, YOU GET AWAY WITH!! BUT *TWICE*—!!

URK?!

SANO... *DESTROYING* TOKYO ISN'T WHAT SHISHIO'S AFTER.

!

SEEING THOSE MONSTERS FOR THE FIRST TIME, PEOPLE SANG, "STEAMBOATS BREAK THE SLUMBER OF THE GREAT SEA/ THO' THEY BE BUT FOUR/THERE'S NO SLEEP THIS NIGHT." THE CITY OF EDO PANICKED.

IN THE 6TH YEAR OF KAEI, PERRY ARRIVED AT THE SHORE OF URAGA. THE BLACK SHIPS MARKED THE START OF THE BAKUMATSU.

THE FEAR OF THAT MOMENT—THE CHAOS OF THE BAKUMATSU— IT'S STILL DEEP WITHIN PEOPLE'S SOULS...EVEN IF IT IS "TOKYO" NOW.

...THE CITY WILL FALL INTO PANDEMONIUM.

EVEN IF *ONE* UNKNOWN SHIP APPEARS AND STARTS FIRING AT TOKYO...

YEAH ...

.....

THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE NO POWER TO QUELL IT...

...AND TOKYO WOULD BECOME A LAWLESS ZONE. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STOP FUNCTION-ING.

THE SITUATION GETS WORSE WITH EVERY HOUR.

I GET IT.

AND THAT'S WHY WE MUST HURRY...

...AS IF IN FLIGHT !!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

DRIVER, SHAKE OFF THAT TRASH UP THERE.

カ

カ

カ

カ

カ

カ

……

GYAAH!

ガキ

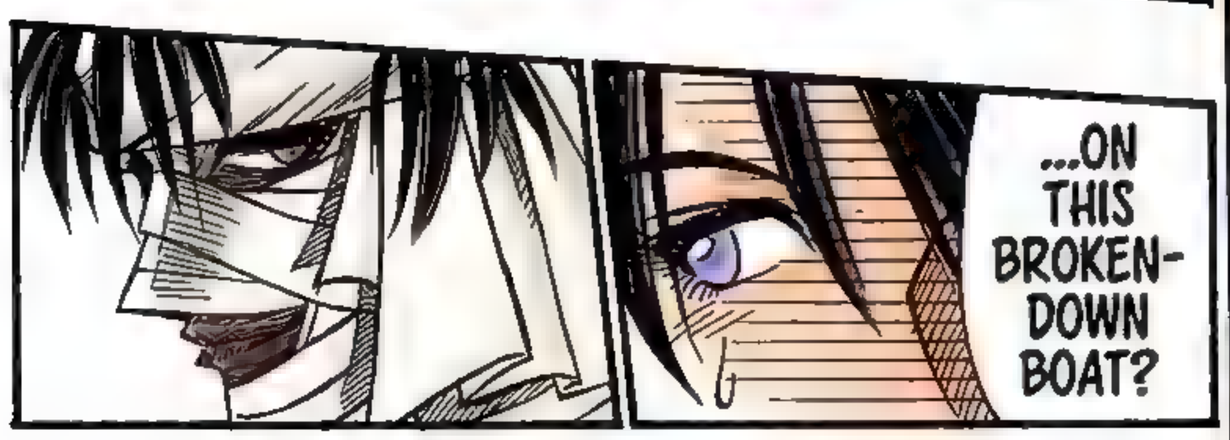
ガキ

ガキ

OSAKA BAY

HUFF
HUFF
.....

BUT DO WE REALLY HAVE TO GO...
I AM HONORED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ASSAULT ON TOKYO, WHICH WAS KEPT SECRET EVEN FROM THE JUPPON-GATANA.


...ON THIS BROKEN-DOWN BOAT?

TROUBLED, YUMI?

UWA?

WAS IT MY *LOOKS* YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH?

TELL ME, YUMI.

...THAT TWO THINGS MAKE THE JOB OF HITOKIRI EASIER.

LIFE DURING THE BAKUMATSU TAUGHT ME...

...HAS ALREADY BEEN MET.

THE FIRST CONDITION, AS YOU WILL AGREE...

THE ABILITY TO BLEND INTO DARKNESS...

...AND THE ABILITY TO BLEND INTO A CROWD.

...WILL REQUIRE A BIT OF SHAPE-CHANGING.

THE SECOND...

IF SO, TAKE A LOOK...

...AT WHAT'S INSIDE *HERE.*

WHAT WOULD *SHISHIO* DO...?

SHISHIO MAKOTO TOOK THIS ONE'S PLACE AS HITOKIRI.

OR DID YOU FALL FOR WHAT'S INSIDE ME?

...KNOWS IT LIKE HIS OWN PALM.

"HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI"...

!

HE'D DISGUISE HIS SHIP...

...AS A MERCHANT VESSEL...

HOW ABOUT IT, YUMI?

THIS IS OUR PRIZE.

RENGOKU... "PURGATORY."

IS *THIS* WORTHY OF YOUR LOVE...?

...YES.

HŌJI, WHAT'S THE TIME?

HURRY! LET'S SET SAIL!

WITH IT, THE HATED MEIJI GOVERNMENT IS FINISHED!

DON'T BE SO HASTY.

ぴょんっ

ぴょんっ

...AND 22 MINUTES.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK...

...AND *RENGOKU* SETS SAIL.

THIRTY-SEVEN MINUTES UNTIL THE FIRE BEGINS...

THIRTY-
SEVEN
MINUTES
UNTIL...

...IT ALL COMES TOGETHER.

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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第百幕「京都大火(前編)」

...IT'S TIME.

REPORT !!

WHERE ARE THE FLAMES?! THEY'RE LATE!

OR THE 2ND UNIT!

THERE ARE TOO MANY POLICE ALL OVER KYOTO! THE FIRST UNIT CAN'T ACT!

AND THE 3RD IS...

DON'T BE IMPATIENT. FIRE DOESN'T SPREAD THAT EASILY.

KILLING POLICE AND CITIZENS IS *NOT* OUR JOB!!

USUI, THE DUTY OF THE TEN SWORDS IS TO KILL GOVERN-MENT OFFICIALS.

WE'LL CREATE A DIVERSION TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO DO YOUR WORK.

WE'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO CHANGE OUR PLANS.

AUGH! YOU FOOLS ARE USELESS!

FEH.

THEY WILL DIE ANYWAY.

ONCE THE FLAMES SPREAD, IT'S ALL THE SAME.

OH.

DON'T BOTHER, IDIOT. YOU'LL GET IN THE WAY.

FUJI AND I WILL DECLINE.

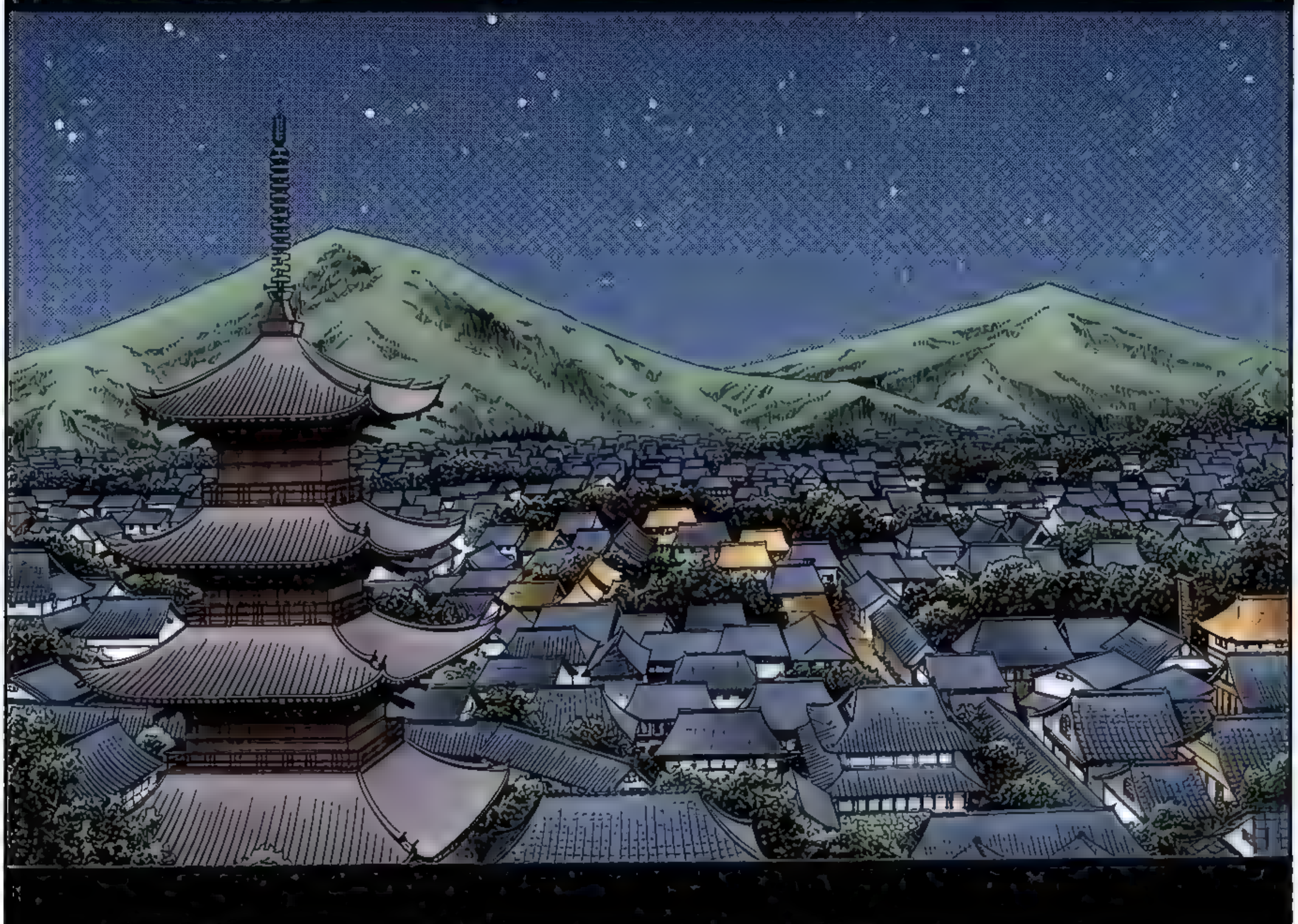
UH... I'M IN.

LOOK, I WON'T FORCE YOU.

I'LL DO IT!

.....

Act 100



The Great Kyoto Fire (Part I)

FIRE!!
FIRE!!

STOP THOSE MADMEN! MAINTAIN AUTHORITY!

H... HEY!

IT'S NO USE! THERE ARE TOO MANY!

RUN!

SWORD UNIT— CHARGE!

ALL RIGHT. WHOEVER WANTS TO RUN, MAY RUN.

BUT... ONLY IF YOU CAN GET PAST MY DEATH SCYTHE.

HUH ?

WHAT ...

A PAWN CAN ONLY MOVE FORWARD!

GO!

WHAT POINT FEAR, FOR A GAME-PIECE?

ESPECIALLY FOR A PAWN.

CHARGE !!

CH- CHARGE!

STOP THEM !!

THEY CAN'T WIN!!

...WHILE THE MAIN UNIT KEEPS THE POLICE BUSY.

AROUND HERE SHOULD BE GOOD...

MM.

ドロ

ダッダッダッ

ARSON!

HELP! HELP!

ナラーン

WHERE? WHERE?

THERE THEY ARE!!

LET'S GET 'EM!!

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY OF THEM—SO LATE AT NIGHT?

W-WAIT A MINUTE!

HMPH!

WE'VE GOT THIS.

GOOD JOB!!

BUT IT'S ONLY JUST STARTED, SO STAY ALERT!!

HEY, MISAO-CHAN... I MEAN, *OKASHIRA*!!

WE GOT 'EM DOWN HERE!

WILL DO.

YOU BE CAREFUL TOO, MISA... *OKASHIRA*.

NOW... EVERYONE GO TO THEIR ASSIGNED POSITION.

SMOTHER THE FIRE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE!

YAY!

...THE ONIWABANSHŪ ARE POPULAR HERE.

HARD TO BELIEVE THEY'RE *NINJA*...

GO FOR IT.

WOO-HOO!

KAORU-SAN! YAHIKO-KUN! IT'S OFF TO THE NEXT—

IT'S A DIFFERENT SHAPE...BUT THE SAME HEART.

ALL RIGHT...

...EVERY-ONE, OFF!

OKINA-SAN AND THE REST CHOSE THIS LIFE...

...AND HERE'S THE FRUIT OF THEIR TEN YEARS' WORK.

YEAH, THE STRONG BOND EVEN A *GATLING GUN* COULDN'T CUT.

THAT'S THE REAL STRENGTH OF THE ONIWABAN-SHŪ ONMITSU.

NO WONDER THE FLAMES WEREN'T STARTING ...

...YOU BAD LITTLE GIRL.

MISAO-CHAN!

!

MISAO...

...IT'S LATE. WE SHOULD BE SEEING FIRE IN KYOTO BY NOW.

WHAT'S HOLDING THEM UP?

THERE'S NO NEED FOR SUCH IMPATIENCE.

IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE'S GOING TO FIND US HERE.

A *LITTLE* DELAY, YES.

THEY'RE UP AGAINST 5,000 POLICE. A LITTLE DELAY SHOULD BE NATURAL.

...YOU'RE GOING *SOFT* ON ME?

OHH...

SHISHIO-SAMA! DON'T TELL ME...

ヒソ

ヒソ

ヒソ

WE'RE SETTING SAIL TO MY GLORY.

WHY WOULD I FEEL NOSTALGIA FOR THIS ROTTEN AGE?

YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH, YUMI.

EVEN IF IT *IS* PART OF YOUR PLAN, TO WATCH MEMORIES BURNING MUST BE HEART-BREAKING, MM?

SO YOU WANT TO WATCH THE END OF IT.

ヒソ

ヒソ

ヒソ

...MY FIGHT WITH THAT MAN.

I DO FEEL SOME REGRET AT PUTTING OFF...

...FIREWORKS TO CELEBRATE OUR DECLARATION OF WAR.

THE FLAMES THAT I'M WAITING FOR ARE FIREWORKS...

AND YET, EVEN SO...

DO YOU SEE FLAMES ?!

HŌJI-SAMA!

!?

!

N-NO... IT'S A CARRIAGE!

A CARRIAGE COMING THIS WAY... AND FAST!

IT'S THE ONLY ONE LETTING OFF STEAM AND READY TO SET SAIL!

...THAT WOODEN SHIP!

WHICH ONE IS SHISHIO'S BOAT?!

KENSHIN! WHICH IS IT?!

STOP!

HE READS MY INTENTION.

HE WAS HITOKIRI, NOT LONG AGO.

HOW DID THEY *KNOW* ...?!

...IT *CAN'T* BE! HOW...

HAVE YOU COME TO SEE ME OFF...

...HIMURA BATTŌSAI?!

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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HEH.

YOUR CLEVERNESS SHALL BE REWARDED...

...HIMURA BATTŌSAI, AND...

...SAITŌ HAJIME, AND...

?

.....

Act 101—The Great Kyoto Fire (Part II)

...AT LEAST... I *THINK* HE...

WHO, HIM? JUST A FRIEND OF HIMURA'S.

EH?

スッ

THERE'S ONE I DON'T KNOW.

HMM...

...BUT ONE FAR WEAKER THAN THE OTHER TWO.

SAGARA SANOSUKE. A STREET FIGHTER WELL-KNOWN IN TOKYO...

IN OTHER WORDS...

...A TAGALONG.

STILL...THE BIG SURPRISE IS YET TO COME!

IDIOT

THE ENEMY'S SURPRISED BY OUR LINEUP.

ドンマイ

Act 101

The Great Kyoto Fire (Part II)

SETTLE THE SCORE FROM SHINGETSU VILLAGE?

SO...

WHAT DO WE DO, SHISHIO-SAMA?

HŌJI, GET EVERYONE INSIDE.

AND PREPARE TO GET RID OF THE OUTER LAYER.

!

OF COURSE, I CAN'T LOOK AS THOUGH I'M RUNNING AWAY.

I'D LOVE TO...BUT WE CAN'T WASTE THE TIME HERE.

...AND, ONCE THEY'VE SEEN THE FUTILITY, *THEN* WE'LL LEAVE.

WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT THEY'RE UP AGAINST...

SO, WHAT NOW?

HH HH HH

THEN, THE BOTTOM OF THE HULL...

...HOLD ON.

WE GET NEAR THE SHIP, UNDERWATER.

I HAVE SOMETHING BETTER THAN A SWORD.

IT'S A LITTLE GRENADE KATSU GAVE ME BEFORE I LEFT TOKYO.

IT'S A NEW DESIGN, DOESN'T NEED ANY IGNITION. SO...

IF YOU DON'T KNOW. YOU'RE AN EVEN *BIGGER* IDIOT.

YOU'RE STARTING TO WORRY ME, HERE.

AGAIN WITH THE INSULTS! WHAT'S SO IDIOTIC ABOUT...?

NOW, NOW...

YOU IDIOT.

NEW DESIGN OR NOT, IT'LL NEVER GO OFF.

SANO...EVEN WITHOUT IGNITION, ONCE IT'S UNDERWATER, THE GUNPOWDER WILL BE WET.

!

SO... IDIOT ...

...YOU JUST COOL YOUR HEELS HERE TILL THE POLICE ARRIVE.

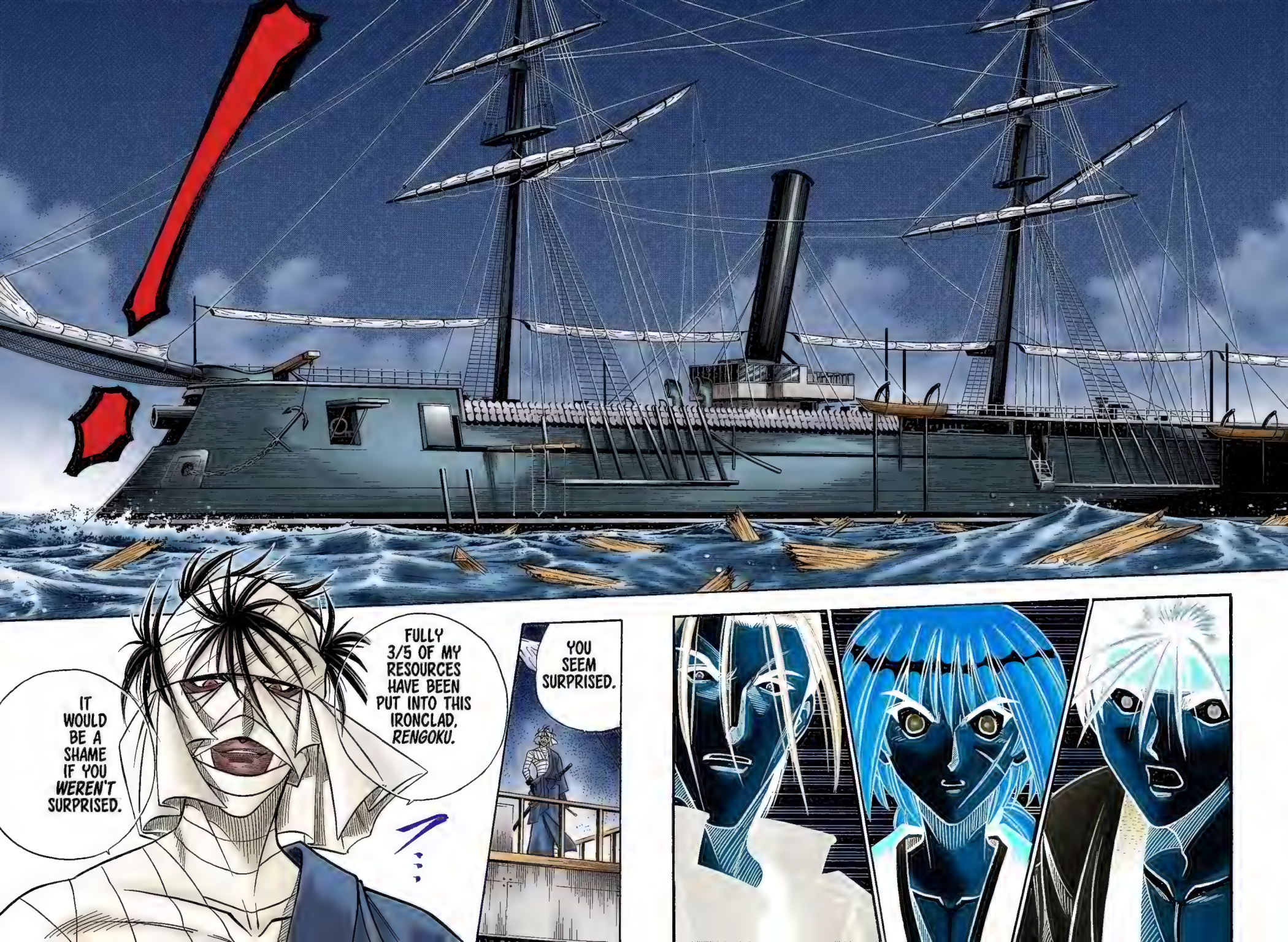
!!!

DID A CANNON BLOW?!

...WH... WHAT?!

NO...

SHISHIO'S SHIP SELF-DESTRUCT-ED?!


!!
IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF YOU WEREN'T SURPRISED.
FULLY 3/5 OF MY RESOURCES HAVE BEEN PUT INTO THIS IRONCLAD, RENGOKU.
...
YOU SEEM SURPRISED.

YES, SIR.

LET'S GIVE THEM AN EVEN *BIGGER* SURPRISE.

HŌJI. PREPARE THE ARMSTRONG CANNON.

.....

HEH...

"METAL SLASH"? NOT UNDER-WATER.

BATTŌSAI, CAN YOU PERFORM "ZANTETSU" ?

AN IRONCLAD. IF AN INDIVIDUAL CAN OBTAIN SUCH A THING...

...THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT IS DOOMED EITHER WAY.

...IN PLANS.

CHANGE...

...GO AROUND BEHIND THEM, AND DESTROY THEIR ENGINE.

YOU GRAB A SMALL BOAT...

SANO, SAITŌ WILL HELP THIS ONE LURE THEIR CANNONS TOWARD US.

FIRE!

LET'S GO!!

WAIT A MINUTE!

.....

NO WAY THEY CAN KEEP DODGING GUNS TILL *THEN!!*

IF I GO HUNTING A BOAT AND SAIL OUT THERE, IT'LL TAKE TOO LONG!

BLAST.

.....

FIRST CANNON HIT!

HUH?

NO, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THE ARMSTRONG.

SHALL WE FIRE ANOTHER, SIR?

...AND MAKE IT QUICK.

PREPARE THE GATLING INSTEAD ...

UWAH!

HH

.....

UWAAAH!

A FINE CHARGE, THERE...

...EXCEPT THAT YOU TOOK IT TOO LIGHTLY.

I CAN SEE *YOUR* PLAN FORMING, AS WELL.

YOU MAY READ MY INTENTION... BUT IT WORKS THE *OTHER* WAY, TOO.

SANZU!!

HIT

WE'VE

GOT

YOU!!

GATLING GUN, FIRE!!

I KNEW ALL ALONG THAT YOU WERE JUST A DIVERSION.

!

ORAH!

THAT...

...WAS ANJI'S "MASTERY OF THE TWO LAYERS"!!

...HE'S NO MERE TAGALONG !!

THAT MAN...

WRAAH!!

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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DO NOT FEAR!

YAAAH!!

IT MAY DAMAGE THE HULL, BUT IT CAN'T HURT THE INSIDE!

IT'S JUST A HAND GRENADE!

URAH!!

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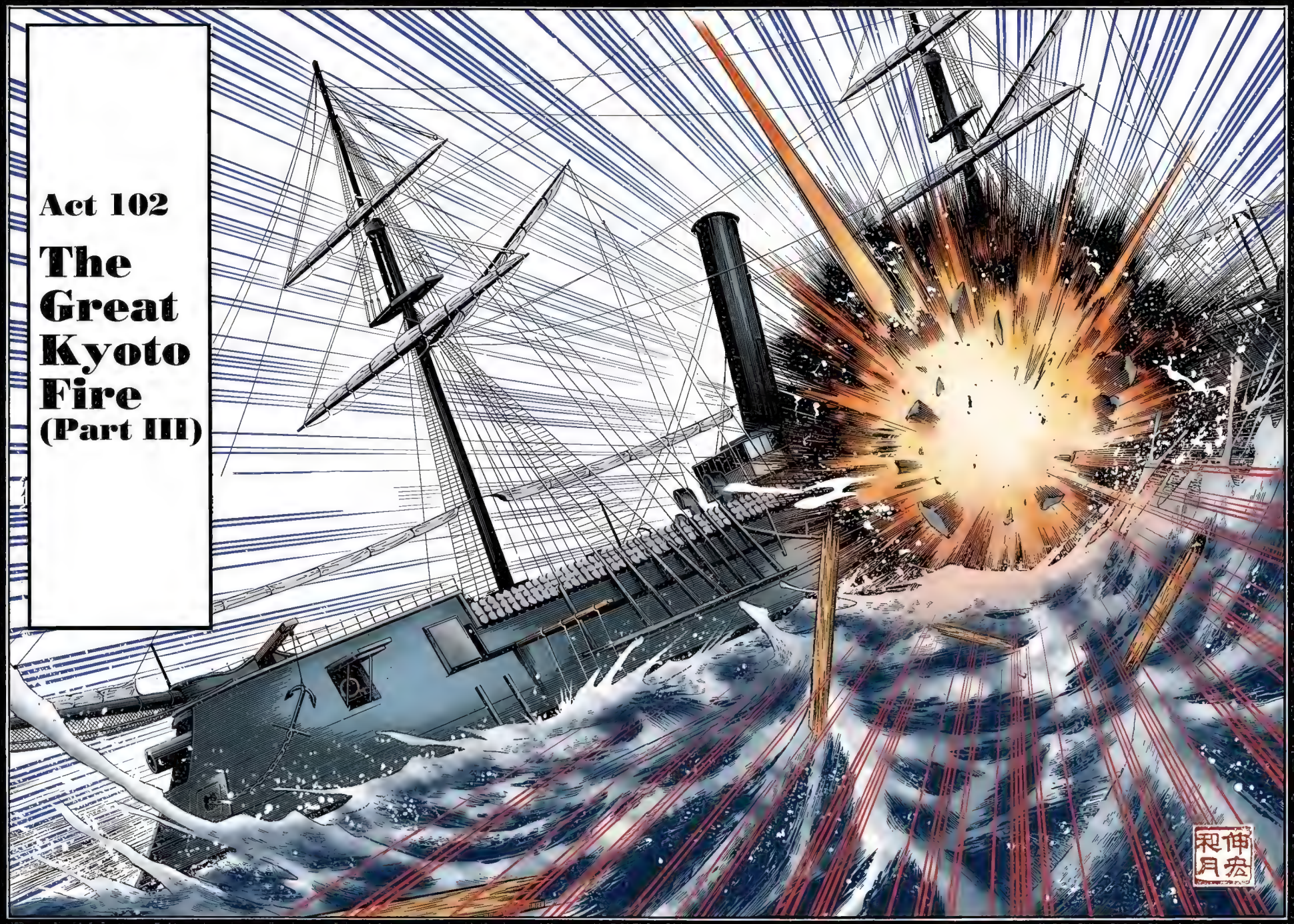
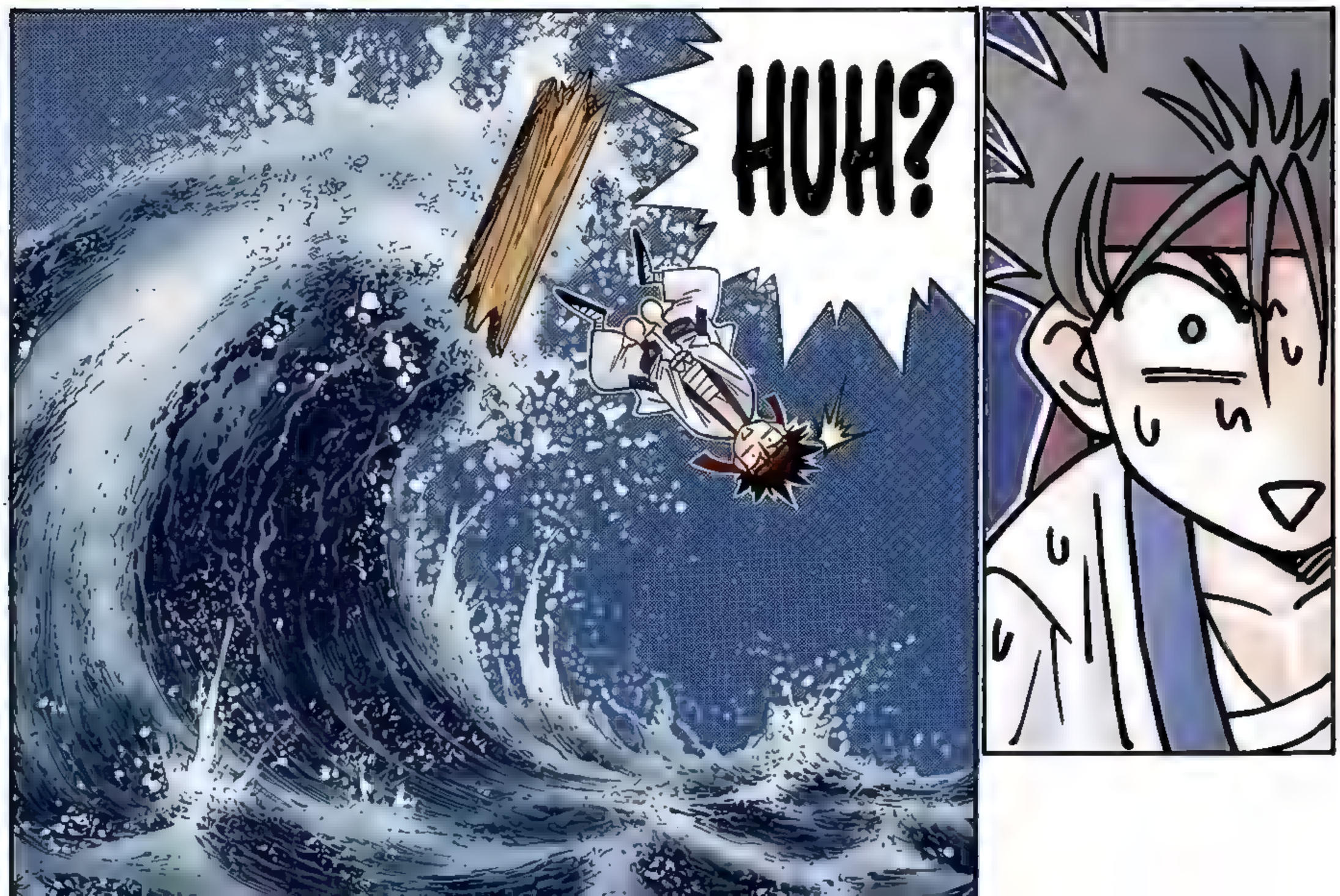

Act 102
The Great Kyoto Fire (Part III)

EEE...!
NG!


HUH?

STILL, IT SURE CAME IN HANDY.

HE HAD ME CARRYING A THING *THAT* DANGEROUS ...?

SOME "SELF-DEFENSE." PFUI.

...CURSE THAT KATSU.

JUST YOU WAIT, SHISHIO MAKOTO! I CAN'T *WAIT* TO SEE YOUR EXPRESSION.

ALL RIGHTY, THEN!

SECTORS, REPORT YOUR DAMAGE!!

WE'VE GOT TO REGROUP!

...FEH!

SCREW SHAFT COMPLETELY BROKEN!

ENGINE ROOM DESTROYED!

THE FLAMES ARE HEADING FOR THE ARMORY!

IN TEN MINUTES IT'S GONNA BLOW!!

THIS IS THE STERN!

HULL BREACH!! IT WON'T HOLD!!

FIRE'S BREAKING OUT— WE CAN'T CONTAIN IT!

HŌJI-SAMA?!

HŌJI-SAMA, PLEASE ORDER THE EVACUATION!

IT'S NOT JUST HIM.

!

CURSE HIM...

ALL THAT EFFORT, PUT INTO *RENGOKU*... ALL THOSE WEAPONS, PERSONALLY CHOSEN...

I *REFUSE* TO LOSE TO AN IGNORANT THUG LIKE THAT!

IT WAS *THAT MAN'S* ARRIVAL THAT UNDID US.

CURSE HIM...

ゴゴゴゴ

...NO.

……

SAITŌ HAJIME PREPARED A BRILLIANT COUNTER-PLAN WITH THE RESOURCES OF THE POLICE.

HIMURA BATTŌSAI SAW THROUGH MY PLAN AND REALIZED THE LOCATION OF OUR SHIP.

BUT IT WAS I WHO TOOK THEM LIGHTLY.

WE WERE DEFEATED BY THE CARELESS-NESS OF SHISHIO MAKOTO!

SHISHIO-SAN.

THE SCORE FROM SHINGETSU?

SHALL WE?

RENGOKU WAS A HIGH PRICE TO PAY...

...BUT I HAVE REALIZED THAT, IN ORDER TO TAKE THIS COUNTRY, I'LL NEED TO KILL *YOU THREE* FIRST.

SETA SŌJIRŌ...!

IN OTHER WORDS, OUR LAIR.

THE PLACE MUST BE THE SHRINE OF SIX GATES, LOCATED MIDWAY UP MT. HIEI, ON THE NORTHEAST SIDE.

ONLY ?

FINE... ONLY...

WE WILL MEET YOU...THE JUPPONGATANA AND I ALONE!

THERE, WE WILL HAVE NO INTER-RUPTIONS.

THERE'S STILL TIME BEFORE THE SHIP SINKS.

NOT TO BE DIFFICULT...

...BUT WOULDN'T TWO-ON-TWO BE QUICKER?

...TEN AGAINST THREE, THEN.

WHY ARE YOU...?

!

ZWEEET

THAT'S DETAIL ENOUGH.

A SIX-GATED SHRINE ON HIEI MOUNTAIN.

.....

PLEASE, HURRY!

SHISHIO-SAMA, WE'RE READY TO EVACUATE!

FROM HERE ON...

...I WILL BE ON GUARD.

NOW, THOUGH, YOU'VE BECOME A DIVERSION WORTH RISKING MY *LIFE* FOR.

BATTŌSAI, THEN AND NOW, YOU REMAIN...

...ONLY A DIVERSION ALONG THE WAY TO TAKING THE COUNTRY.

COME AT ME...

...WHEN READY.

THEY WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT SHISHIO.

THE MEN ON THIS SHIP ARE PROBABLY THE MOST LOYAL OF SHISHIO'S MEN.

IF WE FIGHT HERE, THEIR ESCAPE WILL BE DELAYED, AND SOME WILL DIE.

FRIEND OR FOE, IT'S BEST TO AVOID MAKING VICTIMS.

BUT INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL NOT FALL IN THIS ONE'S BATTLES...

...NOT EVER.

YOU'RE TOO SOFT, AS USUAL. CAN YOU BEAT SHISHIO LIKE THIS?

WHO KNOWS?

YESS!

EVEN WITHOUT PLANNING, IT CAME OUT THE WAY YOU WANTED IT TO.

BRING ON SHISHIO MAKOTO!

NEVER FEAR, SAGARA SANOSUKE'S HERE!

YOU

I

MUST YOU BE SO HARSH?

COME BACK HERE!

HEY, YOU!

つぎー

IDIOT.

ARGH!

SHISHIO IS...

SANO'S MORE DEPENDABLE THAN YOU THINK.

GET BACK HERE! NOW!!

WE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SINK *RENGOKU* WITHOUT HIM.

...IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT HE'S AN IDIOT.

BUT EVEN SO...

I KNOW THAT MUCH WITHOUT BEING TOLD.

IT SEEMS THEY'RE FINE OVER THERE.
SURELY, THERE'S BEEN DEATH...
TRUE, BUT AT LEAST WE STOPPED THE GREAT FIRE.
...IS A VICTORY FOR US.
THE FIRST BATTLE...

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